



School Nurse Bulletin

JANUARY COVID UPDATE EDITION

What a year 2022 has been! This issue of the School Nurse Bulletin will primarily focus on recent changes to school COVID-19 recommendations. Of note, please refer to the [Vermont Department of Health](#) and [Agency of Education](#) webpages for the most up-to-date information. Thank you to every nurse who has asked questions, expressed their concerns, and made suggestions for the COVID response in schools since students returned just a few short weeks ago. Know that your voices have been invaluable in informing decision-makers. You make such a difference in the lives of your school community. Remember to take a deep breath, be kind to yourself, and permit yourself to do something for you.

Respectfully,

Kaitlyn

VERMONT COVID-19 INFORMATION

[COVID-19 Testing | Agency of Education](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions: Vermont COVID-19 School Testing Program | Agency of Education](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccines for Children | Vermont Department of Health](#)

[PreK-12 Schools Vermont Department of Health](#)

[Vermont COVID-19 Self-Test Result Reporting Form](#)

[What to Do if You Test Positive for COVID-19 | Vermont Department of Health](#)

[What to Do if You Are a Close Contact | Vermont Department of Health](#)

[FAQs | Vermont Department of Health](#)

[VCHIP / CHAMP / VDH COVID-19 Updates](#)

[VSSNA Townhalls](#)

[COVID-19 PPE Guidance for Schools](#)

[Covid-19 Testing and PPE Supply Order](#)

TEST AT HOME: IMPLEMENTATION AND LOGISTICS WEBINAR

On Tuesday, January 25th, 2-3:30 PM, Dr. Jill Briggs Campbell from the Agency of Education COVID-19 Response team will offer a webinar to talk through the principles and parameters of the program, with comments from Dr. Becca Bell, discuss different approaches being taken by districts and the logistics of inventory management and resupply of testing supplies and have time for questions and sharing of ideas from the field. This webinar is intended to be pragmatic in nature and as an opportunity to share hard earned wisdom and ideas as schools work to operationalize this new program.

[Click here to join the meeting](#) or call in (audio only) [+1 802-828-7667](tel:+1802-828-7667),576043072#

Phone Conference ID: 576 043 072#



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KAITLYN'S CORNER

- What I'm Drinking: [Alkame Co Sunshine Golden Milk Latte with nomadic kitchen buttered rum marshmallows](#)
- What I'm Reading: [The Guest List](#) by [Lucy Foley](#)
- What I'm listening to: [Allow the Storm to Pass: A Guided Meditation for Resilience - Mindful](#)
- What I'm doing: [First Tracks at Sugarbush](#)



Rescinded: Recommendations for Contact Tracing

On January 13, 2022, Secretary of Education, Dan French, and Commissioner of Health, Dr. Mark Levine, [rescinded recommendations for contact tracing](#). The memo stated that we are in a new phase of the pandemic that requires a different strategy. The pace at which the COVID-19 Omicron variant spreads in combination with a dramatic increase in cases makes contact tracing both ineffective from a public health perspective and untenable from a school operations perspective. Therefore, schools should stop traditional contact tracing in favor of the response notification process that is outlined in the [Test at Home: Vermont School COVID-19 Testing Protocol Win-](#)

[ter 2022](#) . Test at Home Template Communication letters are available on the [Agency of Education Testing webpage](#). In absence of contact tracing, schools will issue broad notifications to families of students who may have had contact with someone identified as a positive case. Students will receive a rapid antigen test to use at home. More information can be found at the [Frequently Asked Questions: Vermont COVID-19 School Testing Program](#) webpage.

January 28th is National Blueberry Pancake Day, get your syrup ready

VT AAP UPDATE

January 11th, 2022– The American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter (AAPVT) supports the direction that the Agency of Education is moving in adapting contact tracing and surveillance testing practices. The proposed model will only be successful with easy access to and adequate availability of rapid tests for all students, educators and school staff. Keeping out children safe is the number one priority and the mission of the AAPVT, keeping them in school is an integral part of that. To read the full press release, click [here](#).

Test at Home Protocol

Testing for Presumptive Contacts

- This applies to both school and community contacts, and to both staff and students.
- PreK students attending programs that are at K-12 buildings are eligible to participate in the program.
- See the details of this scenario [here](#).
- Presumptive school contacts do not need to otherwise quarantine during the testing period. Those who are close contacts to a case outside of school (community or home exposure) should quarantine outside of school according to the Vermont Department of Health [guidance](#).

Diagnostic Testing

- School nurses will have access to rapid testing (antigen and/or LAMP) to provide school-based testing for students or staff with symptoms at school, and for school-based testing for families who need school assistance in administering tests for presumptive contacts.
- If antigen tests are used, a school nurse will conduct one test in school and send a second test home with the family to be completed approximately 24 hours after the first.
- Schools require consent from families to do in-school testing
- If a student does not attend school due to illness, the family may access 2 antigen tests by picking them up at school. Tests should be taken as close to 24 hours apart as possible. Staff may do the same.
- Symptomatic students and staff who have two negative tests, symptom improvement, and are fever free for 24 hours may return to school



COVID-19 PREVENTION AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR WINTER 2022

On January 13, 2022 Secretary of Education, Daniel French, and Commissioner of Health, Dr. Mark Levine, put out an [advisory memo](#) about COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures for Winter 2022 in light of the widespread and highly transmissible Omicron variant.

- **Stay home when sick:** The most important prevention measure is that students and staff should stay home if they are sick. If they show [symptoms of COVID-19](#), have a fever greater than 100.4 F, or are currently in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19, they should stay home. If symptoms begin while at school, they should be tested and sent home as soon as possible, regardless of test results, and the individual should be isolated until they can go home. If they test negative (1 PCR/LAMP test or 2 antigen tests as close to 24 hours as possible) for COVID-19 they can return to school when symptoms improve and they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication. Students and staff who are presumptive contacts should pick up test kits in accordance with their vaccination status.
- **Universal Mask Requirements:** Schools should require universal masking for *all* students and staff when indoors until February 28, 2022 at which time the requirement will be revisited. If it is not extended, after February 28, 2022, masks should no longer be required for all those eligible for vaccination when the vaccination rate among students is equal to or greater than 80% of the school's currently eligible population. Currently, all Vermonters ages 5+ are eligible to be vaccinated. Masks, when required, may be removed when needed for instructional or operational purposes. Masks are currently required for *all* passengers on buses per federal regulation, regardless of age or vaccination status. Masks should not be required outdoors.
- **Use of high-quality masks:** VDH recommends the use of high-quality masks, such as procedure masks, KN95s, and fit-tested N95s as applicable/ available, to help prevent the transmission of the Omicron variant. SU/SDs and Independent Schools may use eligible federal fund, or FEMA Public Assistance to purchase high quality masks for staff and students.
- **Test at Home to replace Surveillance Testing and Contact Tracing:** Surveillance testing and in-school Test to Stay programs will be replaced by the Test at Home program. At-home antigen tests will be provided for students and staff who are a presumptive contact to a case. In-school rapid and PCR/LAMP tests will be available for diagnostic testing. Schools should no longer conduct contact tracing. See [Test at Home: Vermont School COVID-19 Testing Protocol](#)

RETURN TO PLAY

Since new isolation and quarantine guidance was released by the Vermont Department of Health, there have been a lot of questions and concerns about the [Return to Play](#) protocol. This protocol is separate and distinct from return to school or community following close contact or COVID positive tests results. The Return to Play protocol is from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National guidance. Vermont AAP has recommended that schools defer to the local pediatric community for when a student may return to play. We also acknowledge that as a clinical decision making tool, there has been considerable variability in how medical homes/primary care providers interpret and clear students for return. At this time, the VT AAP is awaiting any updates or change in national guidance before changing any Vermont protocol.

BOOSTER AND QUARANTINE

Please refer to the Vermont Department of Health's [What to Do if You Are a Close Contact website](#) regarding students who have completed their initial 2-dose (primary) series of vaccine but have not yet received a booster. Those students do not need to quarantine if they are identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19. This guidance applies to students only. Those who are unvaccinated, regardless of age, and those who are 18 and older who completed the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine series more than 5 months ago and have not had a booster shot, and those who completed their Johnson & Johnson vaccines series more than 2 months ago and have not had a booster shot are recommended to quarantine if they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

TESTING RESOURCES

The Vermont Department of Health has testing resources available on the [webpage](#). These include:

- Where to find a testing location
- Information on the federal free at-home COVID test program
- Information on the Say Yes! COVID test program
- Information on test types
- Instructions, videos, and translations on how to use different tests. Including PCR, Lucira LAMP, BINX, BinaxNOW, Intrivo on/go, and Quidel QuickVue At-home
- How to report results, including [Vermont COVID-19 Self-Test Result Reporting Form](#)
- Frequently asked questions

ORDERING TESTING SUPPLIES FROM AOE

The AOE has stated that moving forward, SU/SDs should expect that it will take one week for their ordered supplies to be delivered and should plan to re-order accordingly. For public schools, test ordering should occur at the SU/SD level only, not the school level. Orders should be submitted by the superintendent, COVID Coordinator, or district-level designee. If you are a principal/school nurse and your school is in need of additional test kits, contact your central office.

VSSNA TALKING POINTS FOR SCHOOL STAFF

The [Vermont State School Nurses Association](#) created the following talking points to share with school staff.

- **Vaccines:** If you are vaccinated and boosted you have taken the most important step in protecting yourself from COVID-19. While being vaccinated doesn't prevent you getting the disease, or transmitting it, the vaccine does prevent severe illness and death.
- **Masks:** Wearing a proper mask in the proper way will protect you and others. Universal masking is supported and recommended by major medical association and institutions. If your school districts do not already have kn95 masks for your safety, advocate for them at both local and state levels.
- **Staying home with symptoms:** When you have even one mild symp-

tom, staying home (whether it turns out to be COVID-19 or not) protects others from catching what you have and protects the medically vulnerable from other disease such as RSV or Influenza. By staying home and following the Vermont Department of Health guidelines you are preventing further spread of disease.

- **Limit your social activities outside of school:** The home environment is the place where COVID-19 is most likely to spread. This is followed by the community environment as the second most likely environment where COVID-19 spreads. The community environment includes dinner parties, outings with friends, sleepovers, birthday parties, weddings, funerals, and interactions in places like restaurants, bars, grocery stores, and other public settings. School is the third and least likely environment for COVID-19 transmission.

COVID-19 SCHOOL TESTING PROGRAM FAQs

The Agency of Education has provided a Vermont COVID-19 School Testing Program [Frequently Asked Questions](#) webpage. This page is updated regularly.

- **Q: How does the Test at Home program work for schools that are above 80% vaccination rate?** Schools with 80%+ vaccinated students should respond to a positive case or cases in school with a [general letter \(see template\)](#) to the school community including instructions and information for families on how to obtain rapid antigen tests. They can do this either by arranging a pickup opportunity for students or families or sending them home with students at the end of the day. Test distribution in schools with an 80+ vaccination rate would be the same as in other schools. Schools should not attempt to track or otherwise determine individual student vaccination status, rather provide the appropriate number of kits requested by the student. The exception to this guideline is pertains to when students have had continuous exposure in their household (See Isolation/Quarantine FAQ #Q5). Schools should not require students to test in order to attend school.
- **Q: We have multiple cases in our middle/high school and it is not logistically feasible to trace each positive case by classroom contacts or we have so many positive cases that the entire school community can be reasonably considered a presumptive contact. What should we do?** When it is no longer logistically feasible to identify presumptive contacts, it is recommended that schools send out a [General Notification letter](#) to the entire school community and offer take home antigen tests. Please note: there is no requirement that students test in order to attend school. Schools should make sure that families have equitable access to testing by ensuring flexibility in pick-up method.
- **Q: What should we do if our school runs low or doesn't have testing supplies?** If a school does not have enough test kits on hand to distribute to students who are presumptive contacts (school exposure), students should continue to come to school. Those who have been identified as close contacts (community exposure) or who are experiencing continuous exposure at home should follow the Health Department's quarantine guidance. Any student who has COVID-19 symptoms should stay home from school. However, schools should not prevent students from attending school based on whether or not they have tested, and it is not the school's responsibility to enforce compliance with Health Department guidance.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness of Vermont) [Ending the Silence](#) is an engaging presentation that helps HS & MS student audience members learn about suicide awareness, the warning signs of mental health conditions and what steps to take if you or a loved one are showing symptoms of a mental health condition.
- Mental Health Advocacy Day is Monday, January 31st from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm to call on Vermont leaders and legislators to support mental health. To learn more and to register, go [here](#)
- NAMI [In Our Own Voice](#) is an educational and recovery-oriented presentation given by trained presenters who are living full and productive lives while personally overcoming the challenges of their mental health condition(s). This program will provide your community or organization with practical, useful information about mental health.
- [NAMI VT Resource Guidebook](#)
- [Supporting Mental Health for All Students: A Series for School Health Professionals | BUSM CME](#)- A 9-part series on supporting Mental Health in Schools. Session recordings are available and continue through February 2022.
- [Stress and COVID-19: A Course for Teens](#)- students may appreciate this course designed by researchers at Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development
- [The Emotional PPE Project](#) connects healthcare workers in need with licensed mental health professionals who can help. No cost. No insurance. Just a trained professional to talk to.
- More **Self-Care Resources** can be found on SHIELD's Website [here](#).

UPDATE ABOUT AFTER HOURS CALLS

The epidemiology and contact tracing teams have issued this update for schools regarding after hours calls:

- For most of the COVID-19 response a Vermont Department of Health (VDH) Duty Officer has fielded after hours calls from schools when the school has had questions or wanted to reach out about a positive case. Given that schools are no longer contact tracing, VDH is moving away from those evening and weekend conversations. We believe these questions from schools can be answered during normal business hours which would help promote a healthier work/life balance for school COVID Coordinators. VDH will alert the answering service that calls from schools no longer need to be referred to the Duty Officer and that message can be returned the next day.

The following webpages are good resources:

[Where to Get Tested](#)

[What to Do if You Are a Close Contact](#)

[What to Do if You Test Positive for COVID-19](#)

[PreK-12 Schools](#)

[Vermont Department of Health FAQs](#)

[Agency of Education Frequently Asked Questions: Vermont COVID-19 School Testing Program](#)

[2022 COVID-19 Testing in Vermont Schools](#)



Umatter Youth and Young Adults (Umatter YYA)

In response to increasing mental health needs of students and staff, The Center for Health and Learning (CHL) has adapted the *Umatter*® Youth and Young Adult (*Umatter*® YYA) program to include a virtual learning event designed to support the mental health of students and staff.

CHL is offering *Umatter*® Youth and Young Adults components in an “a la carte” format. You can engage youth in the *Umatter*® YYA program with flexible participation.

Youth Engagement Speaker (formerly “Kick off”) Event

~ will take place on **March 10, 2022** and is designed for participation by students in any academic class or program, in school or extracurricular. In addition, at or following this event, students and schools can participate in other activities. Click [here](#) to find out more or to register!

For more information contact [Melissa Farr](#), Training and Program Manager at CHL.



CONTINUING EDUCATION

- **The Third Year of COVID-19: Is This the New Normal?** January 26, 2022 5-6:30 p.m. EST. The twenty-second COVID-19 Conversations webinar will provide insight into what we have learned from the omicron variant, and how that knowledge, as well as an evolving understanding of vaccine efficacy, emerging therapeutics, and public health guidance can help us move toward the new normal. This webinar has been approved for 1.5 continuing education credits for **CPH, CME, CNE or CHES**. [Register here](#)
- **Tips and Tricks for Accessing First Call, the Mental Health System of Care, and Resources.** January 27 10-11:00 a.m. EST. Vermont Family Network. This workshop is an opportunity for parents/guardians/caregivers/providers to hear general information about First Call and crisis services, the mental health system of care, and resources available for children, youth and families. It's meant to be informative and open to questions and discussion. [Register here](#)
- **Overcoming Barriers to Health care for Vermonters with Visible & Invisible Disabilities,** February 3, 2022 2-3:00 p.m. EST. [Free](#) upcoming training which will address health inequities for individuals with disabilities, barriers to care that may not be apparent to non-disabled folks, and how to address those obstacles. To register please email Kaylana at kblindow@bistatepca.org with the subject “Disability Training”
- [Motivational Interviewing: A Conversation About Change | Southern New Hampshire Area Health Education Center](#)

PUBLICATIONS

- [Dismantling Systemic Racism and Advancing Health Equity throughout Research - National Academy of Medicine \(nam.edu\)](#)
- [The Evolution of the Role of U.S. School Nurses in Adolescent Mental Health at the Individual, Community, and Systems Level: An Integrative Review - Ashwini R. Hoskote, Emily Croce, Karen E. Johnson, 2022 \(sagepub.com\)](#)
- [Period Product Insecurity, School Absenteeism, and use of School Resources to Obtain Period Products among High School Students in St. Louis, Missouri \(sagepub.com\)](#)
- [Effectiveness and Cost-Benefit of an Elementary School-Based Telehealth Program - Michael W. Long, Sharon Hobson, Jacqueline Dougé, Kerrie Wagaman, Rachel Sadlon, Olga Acosta Price, 2021 \(sagepub.com\)](#)
- [School Nurses Practices Promoting Self-Management and Healthcare Transition Skills for Adolescents with Chronic Conditions in Urban Public Schools: A Mixed Methods Study - Roselaine Charlucien-Koech, Jacqueline Brady, Anne Fryer, Maria E. Diaz-Gonzalez de Ferris, 2021 \(sagepub.com\)](#)
- [Integrative Review of Programs to Improve Outcomes for Children With Comorbid Asthma and Anxiety/Depressive Symptoms - Colleen M. McGovern, Renee Harrison, Kimberly Arcoleo, 2021 \(sagepub.com\)](#)
- [School Health Infrastructure and Students' Elevated Body Mass Index - Safiya S. Bakarman, Michael Weaver, Lisa Scarton, 2022 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

NURSES IN THE NEWS

- [High school nurse supports Vermont's new school guidance \(mynbc5.com\)](#)
- [Vt. student COVID guidance expected to ease workload for schools \(wcax.com\)](#)